



ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports sufficient and sustained funding for the Vision 100 Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act (PL 108-176), which reauthorizes federal aviation programs, with particular emphasis on the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and Essential Air Service Program (EAS).

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARTNERSHIPS

- Support the federal government partnership with local governments and regions to resolve critical workforce issues.
- Engage directly with local elected officials, who understand the local needs, opportunities, and obligations through their “on-the-ground” perspective.

FUNDING

- Reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration quickly and fully fund its programs to the newly authorized levels.
- Maintain and strengthen AIP, and allow airports to build the capacity to meet the demands of future growth, including:
 - authorizing and providing adequate funding for the AIP program;
 - obligating funds annually from the aviation trust fund without delay;
 - removing the aviation trust fund from the federal unified budget; and,
 - using the aviation trust fund for dedicated purposes only.
- Retain funding levels for the EAS program and continue federal subsidies, including the Small Community Air Service Development Program, for airlines serving small communities to ensure that service is not discontinued.
- Provide sufficient new funding to ensure adequate security at both commercial and general aviation airports which does not reduce funding from other essential programs such as the AIP and EAS Programs. Financial burdens related to security requirements should not be imposed on local government and regional entities.

PROGRAM

- Ensure regional authority in aviation decision-making, including:
 - streamlining the federal role in instances where local governments have the capacity to operate and maintain airport facilities;
 - recognizing regional and local control of land use decisions pertaining to air and noise pollution control; and,
 - increasing authority to work in conjunction with airport operators to impose and enforce rates and charges, as well as make decisions on revenue spending for airport development, capital financing and operations.

BACKGROUND

Aviation policy and related programs enhance mobility and support our country’s regional transportation needs, serving as a catalyst for the efficient movement of goods, services and people, while supporting local and regional economic development. Regional, multi-jurisdictional entities and local governments have the capacity to plan and coordinate aviation activities with other land use and transportation factors. Aviation policy should capitalize on this capacity to better integrate aviation needs with other modes of transportation. The following are three important FAA programs:

- AIP provides grant funding to public agencies for the planning and development of public-use airports. Projects eligible for funding include runways, terminals and other enhancements designed to improve airport safety, capacity, security and environmental impacts. The AIP program is funded through the Aviation Trust Fund.
- EAS was developed in response to airline deregulation in 1978, and guarantees small communities are served by certified air carriers and maintain a minimal level of service. Funding subsidizes commuter airlines to serve approximately 140 rural communities across the country that otherwise would not receive any scheduled air service.
- The Small Community Air Service Development Program, a pilot program created under AIR-21 and renewed under Vision 100, provides assistance to enhance air service to small communities. Communities participating in the program regularly experience inadequate air carrier service and unreasonably high airfares. The program is limited to 40 communities nationally with no more than four communities per state.